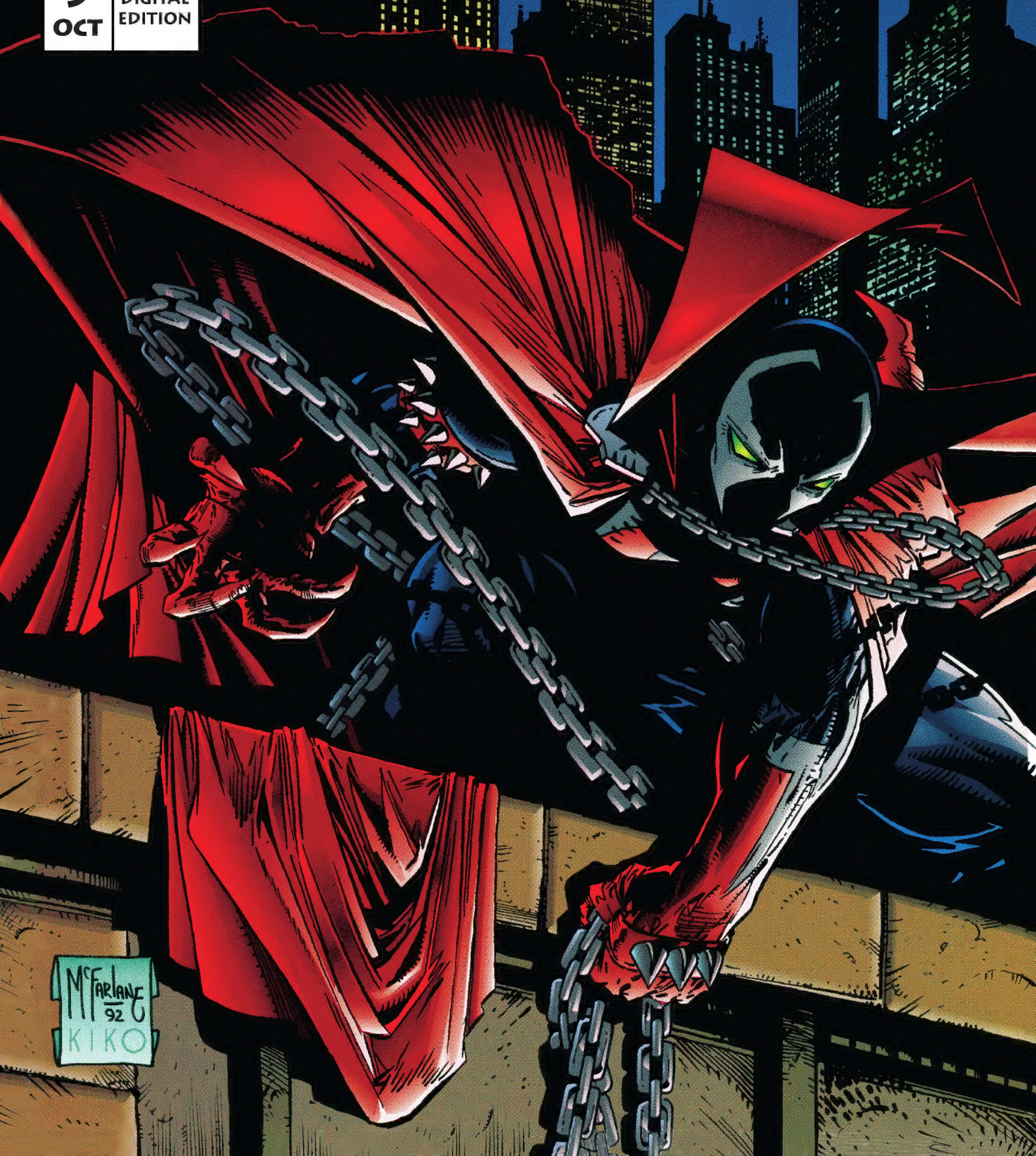


SPAWN

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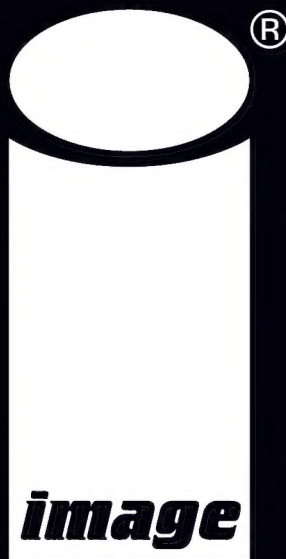
Dedicated to:
WILL EISNER

FOR IMAGE COMICS

LARRY MARDER - exec. director **TONY LOBITO** - publisher

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image

I'LL BE
SORRY TO
SEE YOU
LEAVING US,
BILLY.

EVERYONE HERE AT THE INSTITUTE HAS SO
ENJOYED YOUR COMPANY, BUT WE ALL KNEW THIS
DAY WOULD COME. WE JUST DIDN'T KNOW THAT IT'D
BE SO **SOON**. YOU MUST BE PLEASED WITH YOUR
LAWYER'S EFFORTS. HE SOUNDED QUITE PLEASED THAT
THE COURT UPHOLD HIS PETITION OF APPEAL, CITING
SOME OBSCURE CASE FROM THE 1930'S. THOUGH I
DON'T PRETEND TO KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT THE
LAW, WE CAN BOTH FEEL VINDICATED. THE SYSTEM
DOES INDEED WORK.

IT SADDENS
ME TO HAVE TO SAY
THAT THIS WILL BE YOUR
LAST DAY WITH US. HOW-
EVER, WITH THE JUDGE'S
REDUCTION OF YOUR TERM
ON THAT **TECHNICALITY**,
AND DR. REYNOLDS'
TESTIMONY STATING YOUR
COMPETENCE, THERE'S
NO MORE TO BE SAID.
THE SIX AND A HALF YEARS
YOU SPENT HERE AT THE
INSTITUTE WENT BY
FAR TOO QUICKLY.

TOMORROW,
YOU BEGIN A
NEW LIFE. AN
OFFICER WILL
PICK YOU UP AND
TAKE YOU TO THE
COURT HOUSE,
TO SIGN THE
FINAL PAPERS.

UNFORTUNATELY,
I MUST **WARN** YOU,
BILLY. THERE ARE FORCES
OUTSIDE THAT DON'T
WISH YOU ANY KIND OF
HAPPINESS. THEY MIGHT
EVEN TRY AND BRING BACK
SOME OF YOUR BAD
DREAMS. YOU WON'T
ALLOW THAT, WILL YOU?
WE **BOTH** KNOW THAT
YOU'RE **NOT** THE SAME
PERSON YOU
USED TO BE.

YOU ARE CURED,
**BILLY
KINCAID.**

OTHERS MAY NOT
WANT TO BELIEVE THAT, BUT
THE STAFF AND I HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN IMPRESSED
WITH YOUR **MODEL BEHAVIOR**.
ALWAYS THE
GENTLEMAN.

YES,
YOUR TIME
HERE HAS
BEEN **SO**
REWARDING.

SO
UNEVENTFUL.

SO
THERAPUTIC.

SO
CONVINCING.

UP, SIR,
PLEASE KEEP
YOUR VOICE
DOWN.






BEFORE YOU GO, THE JUDGE WANTED ME TO REMIND YOU THAT YOU'RE *NOT* TO HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH THE *DEAD GIRL'S* PARENTS.

I HAVE ASSURED THEM TO PUT THEIR WORRIES ASIDE... AND THAT THEY WILL HAVE YOUR *FULL CO-OPERATION*.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND, BILLY?

BILLY?!



YES... WELL... LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE OVERWHELMED BY THE WHOLE PROCEDURE. THAT'S *PERFECTLY* UNDERSTANDABLE.

I MUST ADMIT THIS WAS ALL RATHER SUDDEN FOR *ME, TOO*.

BUT WE ARE *ALL* SATISFIED BY THE END RESULT.

SO, I GUESS THAT JUST ABOUT *WRAPS THINGS UP*. DR. REYNOLDS AND I WILL HAVE OUR REPORTS AVAILABLE IN THE MORNING.

I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW AT EIGHT O'CLOCK SHARP.

Uh...

...IS THERE ANYTHING *YOU'D* LIKE TO SAY, BILLY?

I DON'T CARE *HOW* SATISFIED EVERYONE IS. THAT MAN'S A FRIGGIN' *SICKO!* SLAUGHTERED THE KID SO BAD IT TOOK SIX EXPERTS TO FINALLY IDENTIFY THE GIRL.

WE NAILED HIS ASS FOR JUST THE ONE MURDER. I'M NOT HAPPY, TWITCH, BUT IT'S THE ONLY TIME WE CAUGHT 'IM *FLAT*.

JUST LOOK AT HIS EYES...



"...AND TELL ME
THAT MAN'S CURED!"

time.

tomorrow
it becomes
my friend.

but i never forgot.
never stopped
thinking about it.
yes, i have been
so patient and
understanding.

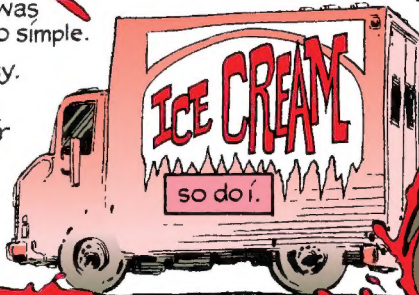
tomorrow i live again.
i have been such a
good boy. always doing
what i'm told. always
being a gentleman.

but it
was well
worth
the wait.

i remember
those good
times...

...it was
all so simple.
so easy.

the children
do love their
sweets.



i like lots
of variety.

terri.
stuart. peter.
david. suzy.
i hate that i
didn't get all
the names.

♪ you scream.
i scream. we
all scream for
ice cream. ♪

not ever.

but i
know the
number...
twenty-
seven.

those were
such fun
times. i will
never forget.



AK, **BILLY**.
NICE TO SEE
YOU **SMILING**.
GLAD YOU'RE SO
HAPPY ABOUT
YOUR IMPENDING
FREEDOM.

I'LL SAY
GOOD-BYE
TO THE
STAFF FOR
YOU.

you scream. i
scream. we all
scream for
ice cream.

Huh?
WHAT THE
HELL
WAS
THAT?!!

JUST A
LITTLE
RHYME
BILLY TAUGHT
EVERYONE
WHILE HE WAS
HERE. RATHER
CUTE, DON'T YOU
THINK?

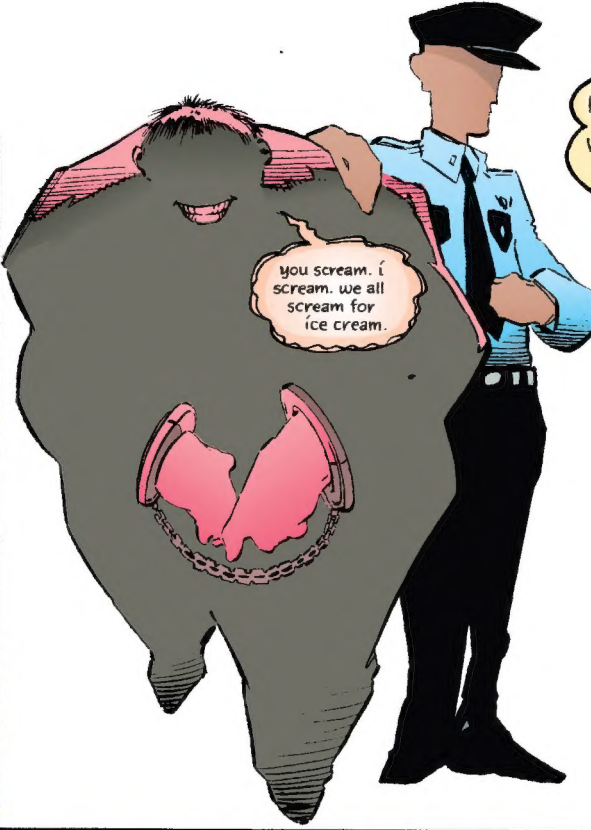
I DON'T
FIND ANYTHING
CUTE ABOUT THAT
WALKING BUTCHER!

I ASSURE YOU,
DETECTIVE...

...THE
PSYCHIATRISTS
HAVE ALL
AGREED...



OH, DO ME
A SMALL **FAVOR**,
BILLY. I'D LIKE
TO SEE YOU
CLEAN-SHAVEN
TOMORROW. THAT
GROWTH IS SO
UNFLATTERING.



SCREW YOUR
PSYCHIA-
TRISTS!!

THAT MAN'S A **FREAK!**
AND IF YOU THINK THAT SITTING
BEHIND **LOCKED** DOORS FOR
SIX YEARS IS A **CURE**, THEN
YOU GUYS ARE EVEN
BIGGER IDIOTS THAN
I THOUGHT!

WHAT HE DID
TO LITTLE AMANDA
JENNINGS **WASN'T** AN
ISOLATED EVENT.

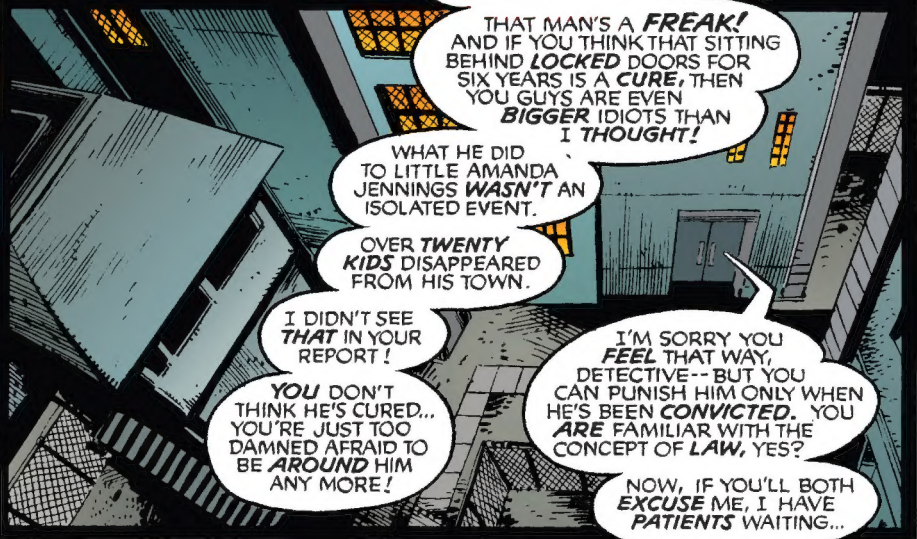
OVER **TWENTY**
KIDS DISAPPEARED
FROM HIS TOWN.

I DIDN'T SEE
THAT IN YOUR
REPORT!

YOU DON'T
THINK HE'S CURED...
YOU'RE JUST TOO
DAMNED AFRAID TO
BE **AROUND** HIM
ANY MORE!

I'M SORRY YOU
FEEL THAT WAY,
DETECTIVE-- BUT YOU
CAN PUNISH HIM ONLY WHEN
HE'S BEEN **CONVICTED**. YOU
ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE
CONCEPT OF **LAW**, YES?

NOW, IF YOU'LL BOTH
EXCUSE ME, I HAVE
PATIENTS WAITING...



THE LAW.

HE HAS
NEVER
WAVERED.

(RIPES!)

IT'S SOMETHING DETECTIVE
SAM BURKE UNDERSTANDS
FAR TOO WELL. IN HIS SIXTEEN
YEARS ON THE FORCE, IT'S
BEEN THE ONLY CONSTANT IN
HIS LIFE.

RAPISTS.
JUNKIES.
WACKOS.
MURDER-
ERS.

HE'S SHARED HUNDREDS
OF EVENINGS WITH **ALL**
OF THEM. SOME NIGHTS
GAVE POSITIVE RESULTS,
OTHERS WENT **DEADLY**.
HE LOST A PARTNER TO
ONE OF THOSE.

BUT, THROUGH ALL THE
OBSCENE SITUATIONS HE'S
BEEN SUCKED INTO,
BURKE'S NEVER LOST SIGHT
OF WHAT MATTERS MOST:
THE LAW. TO UPHOLD AND
PROTECT, TO PROTECT AND
SERVE. **AT ALL COSTS.**

...EVEN
TO THE
POINT OF
FEELING
STRANGLER
BY HIS
OWN MORAL
CONVIC-
TIONS.

HE'S
NEVER
MADE
ROOM
FOR
OBSTA-
CLES.

FOR THE
UMPTIEN-
TH TIME HE
CURSES
HIMSELF
AND HIS
OCCUPA-
TION.

MORALS
HAVE BE-
COME
ONLY A
CAREER
HAZARD.

YES, HE'S
COURTED THE LAW.

UNFORTUNATELY,
IT HASN'T ALWAYS
BEEN A BLISSFUL
BED PARTNER.

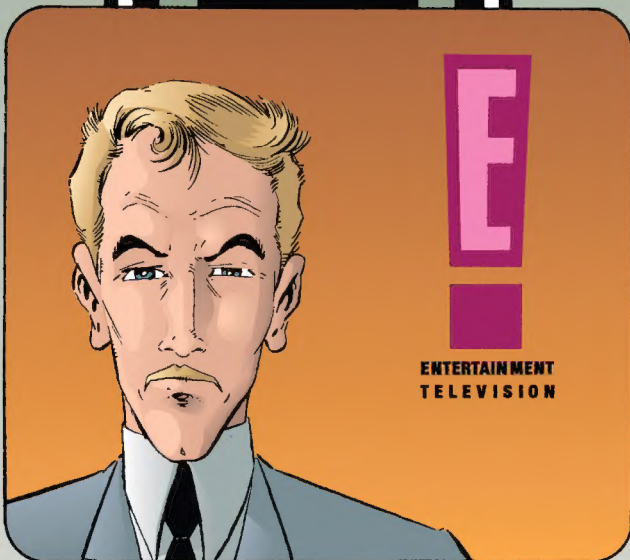
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AND IN NEW YORK, JEFF PITMAN, ATTORNEY FOR CONVICTED CHILD KILLER BILL KINCAID, WAS FINALLY SUCCESSFUL IN HIS ATTEMPTS TO MITIGATE KINCAID'S SENTENCE. THE ORIGINAL TWENTY-TWO YEAR TERM WAS REDUCED TO TEN YEARS. THAT, COMBINED WITH TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR AND TIME SERVED, MAKE BILL KINCAID A FREE MAN TOMORROW.

IT WAS NEARLY EIGHT YEARS AGO THAT A JOGGER IN NEW YORK CITY FOUND AMANDA JENNINGS' BODY UNDER THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE. THE EIGHT YEAR OLD GIRL WAS THE DAUGHTER OF FORMER SENATOR PAUL JENNINGS.

JENNINGS' HIGH-PROFILE EXTRA-MARITAL AFFAIR TARNISHED HIS RE-ELECTION BID A YEAR EARLIER. SOME SOURCES FELT THAT HIS MORE TRADITIONALLY-ORIENTED FORMER SUPPORTERS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT GAVE THE MATTER LESS ATTENTION THAN IT WARRANTED.



BELIEVE ME, IT WAS ONE TORRID LOVE AFFAIR. SENATOR JENNINGS AND MARLA FLEET WERE THE TALK OF THE TOWN DURING HIS RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN. VOTERS DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT BUDGETS OR TAXES. THEY WERE MORE INTERESTED IN THE STEAMY DETAILS OF HOW SENATOR JENNINGS SWEEPED THE FORMER MISS UNIVERSE OFF HER FEET. MIX IN AN EXTREMELY VENGEFUL WIFE AND THE MEDIA HAD ITSELF A FEAST FOR MONTHS.

THE STORY THAT MADE THE ROUNDS AT THE TIME-- THAT THE FORMER SENATOR'S RAGING HORMONES LED TO LESS OF AN INVESTIGATION OF HIS DAUGHTER'S DEATH-- IS TRULY DISTURBING. THESE WAGS IMPLY THAT WHILE JENNINGS WASN'T MUCH LOVED WHILE IN OFFICE, THE TAWDRY TRUTH BEHIND HIS DOWNFALL MAY HAVE LED TO INADEQUATE INFORMATION REACHING THE INTERESTED PARTIES.

AS A RESULT, BILLY KINCAID RECEIVED A TWENTY-TWO YEAR STRETCH INSTEAD OF THE LIFE SENTENCE WITHOUT PAROLE THAT THE PUBLIC SO DEARLY WANTED.



SURPRISE! SURPRISE!

KIDDIE KILLER KINCAID, FREE TO WALK THE STREETS OF THE BIG APPLE! WE'VE BEEN FAVORED WITH YET ANOTHER AWE-INSPIRING RULING AS THE COURTS ALLOW THIS CHILD-MURDERER HIS FREEDOM. AFTER PESTERING THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM WITH HIS WHINING AND APPEALS THESE PAST FIVE YEARS, KINCAID'S LAWYER FINALLY GOT WHAT HE WANTED-- ANOTHER PSYCHO READY TO ROAM CENTRAL PARK. OH JOY! OH RAPTURE! I FEEL SAFER ALREADY.

C'MON, FOLKS! I HATE REPEATING MYSELF BUT I'M NOT SURE ANYONE'S LISTENING. LOOKIT, THE WAY I SEE IT, KINCAID'S LAWYER DID US ALL A FAVOR. FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS, BILLY'S BEEN HIDDEN FROM US, BUT NOW WE HAVE AN OPEN OPPORTUNITY. I GUARANTEE THAT HE WAS A LOT SAFER ON THE INSIDE.

MY ONLY WISH IS THAT SOMEONE BREAKS HIS BACK. HELLO! ARE YOU LISTENING, MR. SHADOWHAWK?

QUEENS.

NIGHT HAS ENVELOPED A SMALL SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD. AMONG THE HOMES SWALLOWED BY THE DARKNESS IS WANDA BLAKE'S.

SHE IS WIFE.

BUSINESS-WOMAN.

MOTHER.

IT'S THIS LAST ROLE THAT OCCUPIES HER TIME NOW.

OH, YOU POOR LITTLE ANGEL.

FELL ASLEEP RIGHT ON TOP OF YOUR TOYS! I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GET ALL THAT ENERGY, BUT I NEVER WANTED A DOCILE LITTLE GIRL, ANYWAY.

...THOUGH, AT TIMES, IT WOULD BE NICE.

NOW YOUR MOMMY AND DADDY CAN HAVE SOME TIME TOGETHER.

THERE YOU GO.

SHE STANDS AT HER DAUGHTER'S CRIB-SIDE FOR NEARLY TEN MINUTES, SMILING DOWN AT THE CHILD SHE THOUGHT SHE'D NEVER HAVE.

HER ONLY REGRET IS THAT HER BABY IS GROWING UP SO VERY QUICKLY. SHE PRAYS SHE WILL REMEMBER THIS TIME, THIS JOY. AS SHE LEAVES THE ROOM, WANDA WHISPERS A SMALL WISH:

"DREAM WELL TONIGHT, MY SWEETHEART."

I DON'T KNOW WHY MY BLOOD **BOILS** EVERY TIME I THINK OF KINCAID. YOU'D FIGURE I'D BE OVER THIS GUY AFTER SIX YEARS.

DETECTIVE BURKE

201

BUT I'VE GOTTA TELL YOU, TWITCH, HE DID THINGS TO THE JENNINGS GIRL THAT WERE BEYOND BELIEF... HER TEETH PULLED OUT BY PLIERS, MAGGOTS DROPPED INTO HER CUTS, AND...

...AND...

Ah, HELL, YOU'VE SEEN THE REPORT.

YES, SIR.

AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE QUITE A LARGE FAMILY.

Y' OUGHT TO COME BY THE HOUSE.

MY SEVEN CHILDREN ARE VERY PRECIOUS TO ME. WHAT KINCAID DID IS UNFORTUNATE. HOWEVER, HIS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS MUST BE UPHELD.

YEAH! YEAH!

I KNOW. I GET REMINDED EVERY TIME I WALK THROUGH THAT DOOR!

YOU KNOW THAT CHIEF BANKS TOOK A CHUNK OUT OF ME FOR THAT TRIP WE TOOK TO THE WINDGATE INSTITUTION THIS AFTERNOON. DOESN'T WANT ME TAKING OUT "SOME PERSONAL VENDETTA" ON THE TAXPAYER'S NICKEL. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT!!

A FRIGGIN' SENATOR'S KID GETS SLICED INTO QUARTER-INCH CUBES AND WE CAN'T BE BOTHERED ?!!

WHAT'S A PSYCHO GOTTA DO TO GET OUR ATTENTION ANYWAYS ?

LIKE OUR FRIENDS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION, I PRIDE MYSELF ON FINDING LOOPHOLES, SIR...

...SO I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'RE **FREE** AFTER WORK FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS OR SO, IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN ME IN MY **NEW HOBBY...**

MIDNIGHT STAKEOUTS!

JUST A COUPLE OF PALS DOING A LITTLE MALE-BONDING IN THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD, **BY COINCIDENCE,** AS A CERTAIN KID KILLER.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, PAL ?

TWITCH, I LIKE YOUR STYLE.

THANKS, SIR.

TWO DAYS LATER...

you scream.
i scream.
we both screamed
for ice cream.

MISTER!
MISTER!

ALTHOUGH SHE
WON'T NOTICE,
TODAY LITTLE
SHERLEE JOHNSON
WILL BE GETTING
SERVED BY A
NEW VENDOR....

hi! that sure is a
pretty dress
you have...

sure,
sure.

take all
you want.
get the best
flavor.

GEE!
THANKS!

...so pretty that you
get a free popsicle. go
inside the truck and
get your favorite.

REALLY?

four.
five.
six.
seven.
eight.
and nine!
i just love
doing finger-
painting!

one.
two.
three.

it's sooo
fun.

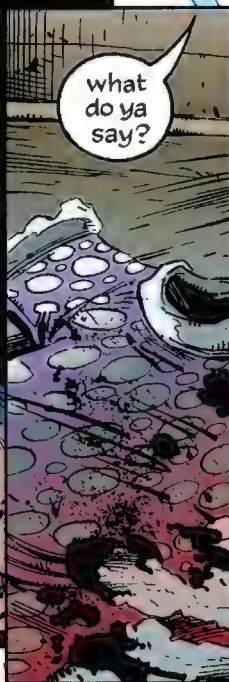
GLUE



but what's a party without a few friends?

maybe tomorrow we can go find us a little male friend.

might liven up the place.



what do ya say?



MAMA!
MAMA!

WHAT! WHAT!
WHAT!
SWEETIE.



BOY, ARE YOU FULL OF BEANS TODAY. HOPE YOU WERE A GOOD GIRL FOR MRS. PALMER.



HOW WAS SHE TODAY, PAM?

SHE'S ALWAYS GOOD, WANDA.

IF I HAD MORE KIDS LIKE HER AT THIS DAYCARE IT'D SURE MAKE MY LIFE A WHOLE LOT SIMPLER.

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE ME THE RECIPE TO THOSE **HAPPY PILLS** YOU GIVE HER.

I MISS YOU, MAMA.



YEAH, WE'RE VERY LUCKY. SHE'S BEEN SUCH A GOOD BABY FOR US. ALTHOUGH TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WHEN I FOUND OUT I WAS PREGNANT, I'D HAVE TAKEN ANYTHING THAT CAME MY WAY.

WELL, YOU'VE BOTH BEEN GREAT PARENTS SO FAR. TERRY HAS BEEN JUST AN AMAZING DAD.

"DAD."

THE NAME TEARS THROUGH SPAWN'S HEART LIKE A BULLET. IT'S A NAME THAT HE SO DESPERATELY WANTED TO BE CALLED DURING HIS LIFE WITH WANDA.

NOW HE KNOWS THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN. WHAT MAKES IT WORSE IS THAT HE CAN'T BLAME THE DEVIL FOR THIS ONE.

EVEN BEFORE HIS DEATH, HE'D BEEN CURSED.

SO, HE CONTINUES TO WATCH FROM A DISTANCE AS THE WOMAN HE LOVES-- HIS WIFE-- PLAYS GLEEFULLY WITH THE CHILD CONCEIVED BY HER CURRENT HUSBAND.

I'M GONNA GET'CHA!

Hee... MAMA... DON'T... Hee--

AFTER A TIME, HE RETREATS...

...TO A PLACE WHERE HE SPENDS HIS NIGHTS, LOST AMONG LOST SOULS.

"WHEN JOHNNY CALLED ME THE 'DESTRUCTOR OF SOCIETY,' I ABOUT PEE'D MYSELF.

SO I SAYS TO HIM-- "JOHNNY, OLD SON, HOW CAN I BRING DOWN SOCIETY WHEN I CAN'T EVEN SPEAK JAPANESE OR FRENCH?!"

WHEN ALL THE CHEAP WINE HAS VANISHED AND THE FIRE HAS STARTED TO DIE OUT...

...THESE TEMPORARY FRIENDS HUDDLE TOGETHER FOR A FEW HOURS' REST...

TONIGHT, THESE OUTCASTS OF THE WORLD HAVE BANDED TOGETHER FOR COMPANIONSHIP. A FEW LAUGHS, A FEW SLIGHTLY EXAGGERATED STORIES.

...TRYING TO ESCAPE THE GHOSTS THAT HAUNT THEM. FOR A SHORT TIME SLEEP IS ALMOST A CURE.



ALMOST.

WHEE-O WHEE-O WHEE-O

CRIPES!
DAMN BUMS
BLOCKING ANOTHER
ALLEY. ALWAYS
SLOWING US
DOWN!

K-KASH
KANGG

TUNCH!

GOT A
ROBBERY IN
PROGRESS AND
I CAN HARDLY
SEE WHERE I'M
GOING!

SOMEONE
OUGHTTA
RUN THESE
LOSERS
OUTTA
TOWN!

JEEZ!

C'MON, GEORGE,
SLOW IT DOWN!
A BIT! YOU'RE
DRIVING LIKE
A LUNATIC!

SPKAASH

SPATICK

KNGH-KKH

JOEY?

HEY, JOEY, C'MON MAN

STOP KIDDIN'!

JOEY!

GOD.

HOLY--! LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO HIM! THOSE DAMN COPS DIDN'T EVEN SLOW DOWN.

PLOWED RIGHT THROUGH WHERE HE WAS LYING.

THEM BLOODY COPS DON'T GIVE A CRAP ABOUT US! WE AIN'T EVEN WORTH BRAKING FOR BEFORE THEY RUN US DOWN!

SUPPOSED T' BE PROTECTING THE LAW--

HA!

THEY BREAK THE LAW EVERY TIME NO ONE'S LOOKIN'--

I TOLD HIM NOT TO SLEEP UNDER THEM BOXES.

BUT YOU KNOW HOW JOEY WAS, YOU COULDN'T TELL HIM NOTHIN'!

THEY AIN'T GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH JOEY!

AND THEY AIN'T PROTECTING ME FROM SQUAT!

THEM BUGGERS CALL IT JUSTICE-- WELL, LOOK AT THIS!

KINCAID!
FREE!

ALREADY... IT CAN'T... damn! KEEP FORGETTING FIVE YEARS HAVE GONE BY.

RUNNING DOWN AN INNOCENT MAN TRYING TO FIND WARM FROM THE WIND... AND LETTING THIS KINCAID FELLOW GO, AFTER KILLING


BABIES!

THAT AIN'T JUSTICE, THAT'S

NUTS!

"BILLY" KINCAID FREED; MURDER CHARGE REDUCED

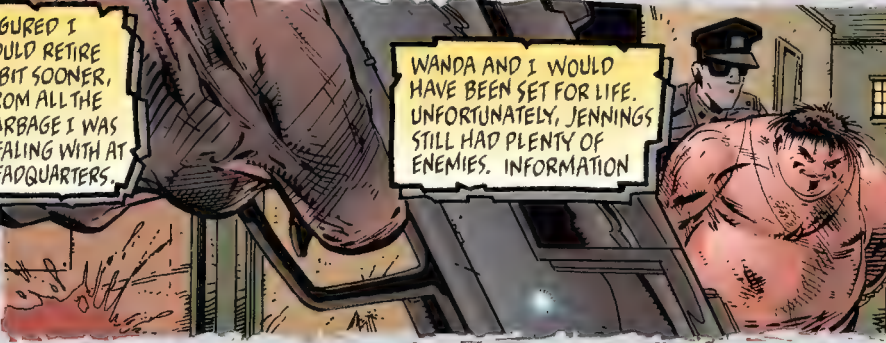
GOOD! I WON'T LOSE OUT A SECOND TIME.



I REMEMBER JENNINGS' HIRING ME TO KILL KINCAID. SAID HE COULDN'T STAND TO SEE HIS EX-WIFE SUFFER.

EVEN THOUGH HE WASN'T WITH THE GOVERNMENT ANYMORE, HE KNEW WHAT I WAS ALL ABOUT.

A MILLION BUCKS FOR THE HIT. NO ONE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT IT-- NOTHING I COULDN'T HANDLE.




FIGURED I COULD RETIRE A BIT SOONER, FROM ALL THE GARBAGE I WAS DEALING WITH AT HEADQUARTERS.

WANDA AND I WOULD HAVE BEEN SET FOR LIFE. UNFORTUNATELY, JENNINGS STILL HAD PLENTY OF ENEMIES. INFORMATION


BY THE TIME I LOCATED KINCAID, THE COPS HAD BEAT ME TO HIM.

THE SICK PART WAS THAT KINCAID WAS SMILING MORE BROADLY THAN THE COPS.



I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT. WHY WOULD HE BE LAUGHING?

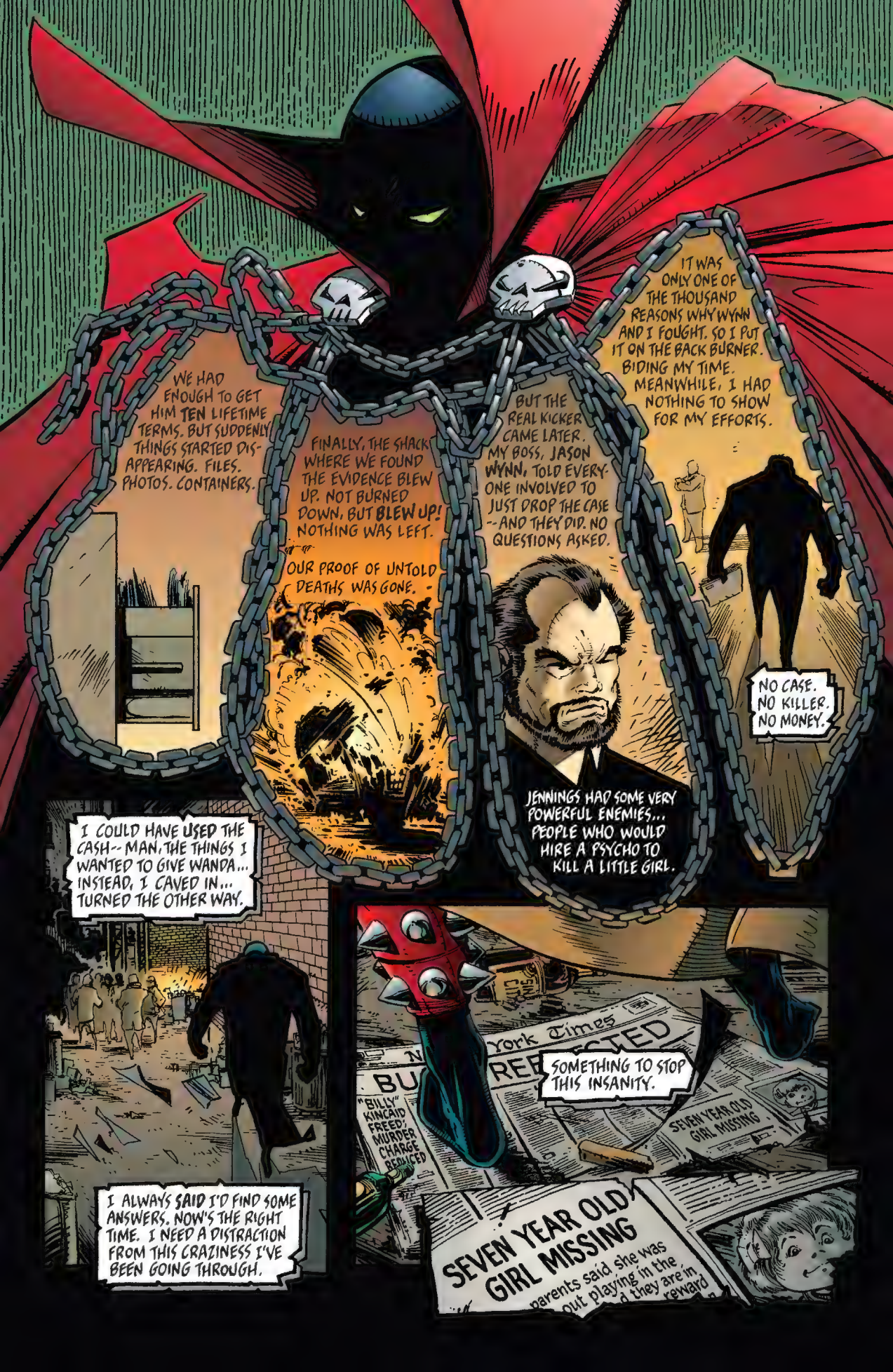
EVEN DURING HIS TRIAL HE HAD THAT SICKLY SMIRK ON HIS FACE. WHEN THE JUDGE PUT HIM AWAY, HE LAUGHED AGAIN. WHY?



I FOUND OUT TWO WEEKS LATER.

IN AN ABANDONED SHACK IN NORTH-WEST VIRGINIA WERE... REMAINS. MULTIPLE BODIES. ALL KIDS. ALL SO MUTILATED WE NEVER DID GET A FINAL BODY COUNT.

THAT SHACK BELONGED TO BILLY KINCAID.



WE HAD ENOUGH TO GET HIM TEN LIFETIME TERMS. BUT SUDDENLY THINGS STARTED DISAPPEARING. FILES. PHOTOS. CONTAINERS.

FINALLY, THE SHACK WHERE WE FOUND THE EVIDENCE BLEW UP. NOT BURNED DOWN, BUT BLEW UP! NOTHING WAS LEFT.

OUR PROOF OF UNTOLD DEATHS WAS GONE.

IT WAS ONLY ONE OF THE THOUSAND REASONS WHY WYNN AND I FOUGHT. SO I PUT IT ON THE BACK BURNER. BIDDING MY TIME. MEANWHILE, I HAD NOTHING TO SHOW FOR MY EFFORTS.

BUT THE REAL KICKER CAME LATER. MY BOSS, JASON WYNN, TOLD EVERYONE INVOLVED TO JUST DROP THE CASE --AND THEY DID. NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

NO CASE. NO KILLER. NO MONEY.

JENNINGS HAD SOME VERY POWERFUL ENEMIES... PEOPLE WHO WOULD HIRE A PSYCHO TO KILL A LITTLE GIRL.

I COULD HAVE USED THE CASH-- MAN, THE THINGS I WANTED TO GIVE WANDA... INSTEAD, I CAVED IN... TURNED THE OTHER WAY.

I ALWAYS SAID I'D FIND SOME ANSWERS. NOW'S THE RIGHT TIME. I NEED A DISTRACTION FROM THIS CRAZINESS I'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH.

SOMETHING TO STOP THIS INSANITY.

SEVEN YEAR OLD GIRL MISSING

parents said she was out playing in the yard and they are in reward

"BILLY" KINCAID FREED; MURDER CHARGE REDUCED

NEW YORK TIMES
RECEIVED

SEVEN YEAR OLD GIRL MISSING

A comic book panel showing the character Spawn swinging through a city skyline at dusk. He is suspended by two large, dark flags with red triangular tips, which are attached to chains. The city features various skyscrapers and buildings, with a prominent one on the right having a sign that says 'FIVE'. The sky is a mix of purple and orange.

SO IT BEGINS.

A NEW PURPOSE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE HELTER-SKELTER LIFE OF THE SPAWN. THIS FORMER MERCENARY HAS A BLEMISH ON HIS RECORD. HE MEANS TO CLEAN THAT UP.

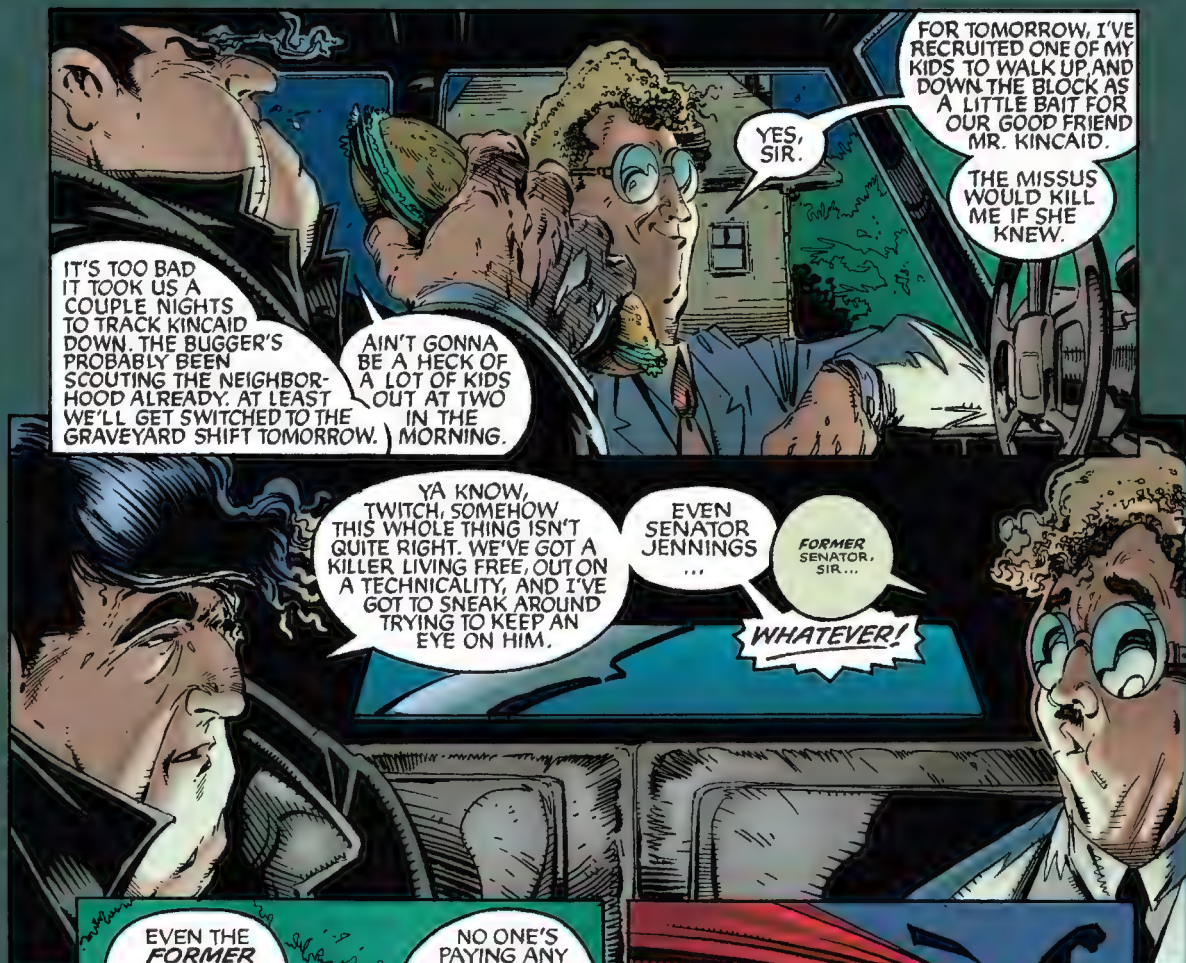
IS IT A DECISION BORN OF LOGIC? A DEAD MAN'S AFFAIRS BEING PUT IN ORDER?

No.

THIS IS THE RATIONALE OF A HIRED GUN WHO'S BACK FROM THE GRAVE.

WITH ALL THAT'S WRONG IN HIS "LIFE", THE ONLY WAY TO TAKE HIS MIND OFF THINGS IS WITH WORK. FOR AN EX-GOVERNMENT ASSASSIN, THAT MEANS DANGER. FEAR. DEATH.

HIS ADRENALINE IS PUMPING ALREADY.



IT'S TOO BAD IT TOOK US A COUPLE NIGHTS TO TRACK KINCAID DOWN. THE BUGGER'S PROBABLY BEEN SCOUTING THE NEIGHBORHOOD ALREADY. AT LEAST WE'LL GET SWITCHED TO THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT TOMORROW.

AIN'T GONNA BE A HECK OF A LOT OF KIDS OUT AT TWO IN THE MORNING.

YES, SIR.

FOR TOMORROW, I'VE RECRUITED ONE OF MY KIDS TO WALK UP AND DOWN THE BLOCK AS A LITTLE BAIT FOR OUR GOOD FRIEND MR. KINCAID.

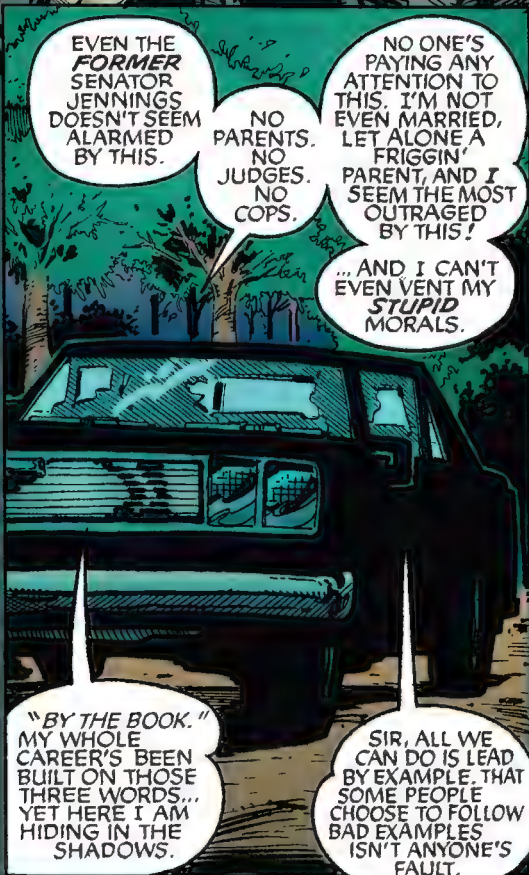
THE MISSUS WOULD KILL ME IF SHE KNEW.

YA KNOW, TWITCH, SOMEHOW THIS WHOLE THING ISN'T QUITE RIGHT. WE'VE GOT A KILLER LIVING FREE, OUT ON A TECHNICALITY, AND I'VE GOT TO SNEAK AROUND TRYING TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.

EVEN SENATOR JENNINGS

FORMER SENATOR, SIR...

WHATEVER!



EVEN THE FORMER SENATOR JENNINGS DOESN'T SEEM ALARMED BY THIS.

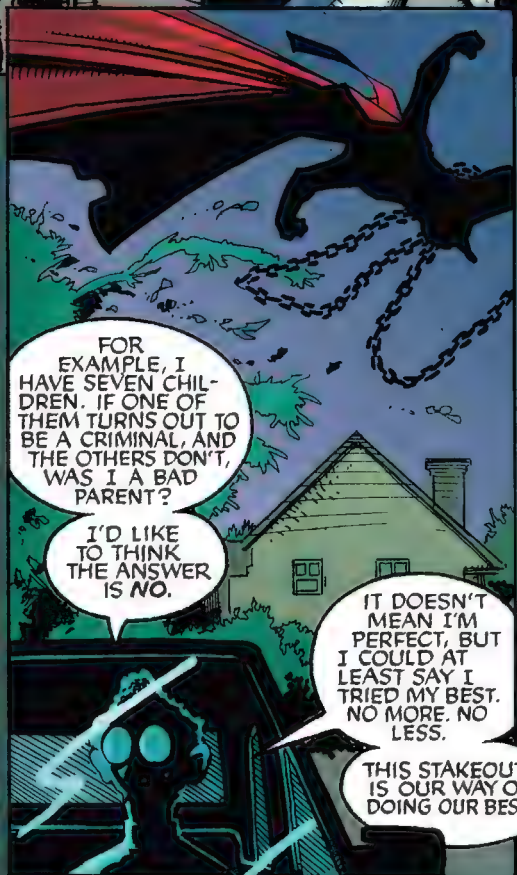
NO PARENTS. NO JUDGES. NO COPS.

NO ONE'S PAYING ANY ATTENTION TO THIS. I'M NOT EVEN MARRIED, LET ALONE A FRIGGIN' PARENT, AND I SEEM THE MOST OUTRAGED BY THIS!

...AND I CAN'T EVEN VENT MY STUPID MORALS.

"BY THE BOOK." MY WHOLE CAREER'S BEEN BUILT ON THOSE THREE WORDS... YET HERE I AM HIDING IN THE SHADOWS.

SIR, ALL WE CAN DO IS LEAD BY EXAMPLE. THAT SOME PEOPLE CHOOSE TO FOLLOW BAD EXAMPLES ISN'T ANYONE'S FAULT.



FOR EXAMPLE, I HAVE SEVEN CHILDREN. IF ONE OF THEM TURNS OUT TO BE A CRIMINAL, AND THE OTHERS DON'T, WAS I A BAD PARENT?

I'D LIKE TO THINK THE ANSWER IS NO.

IT DOESN'T MEAN I'M PERFECT, BUT I COULD AT LEAST SAY I TRIED MY BEST. NO MORE. NO LESS.

THIS STAKEOUT IS OUR WAY OF DOING OUR BEST.



"WE'RE NOT BREAKING THE LAW, SIR. WE'RE JUST GIVING IT A HELPING HAND."



i hate nights.

no sun.
no kids.
no fun.



tomorrow
i'll go out and
play, but i need to
find some excitement tonight.



now let
me think.

um.



um.



HE'S AT IT
AGAIN.



IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO
HE TAKES. HE DOESN'T
CARE WHOSE KID IT IS.

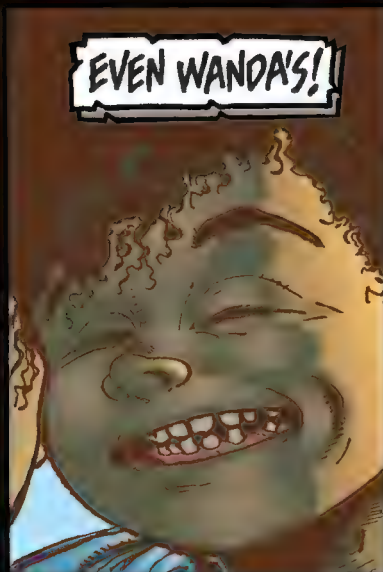
IT COULD BE
ANYONES'.

um.



hee.
hee.
hee.

oh, billy, that's
a good one.

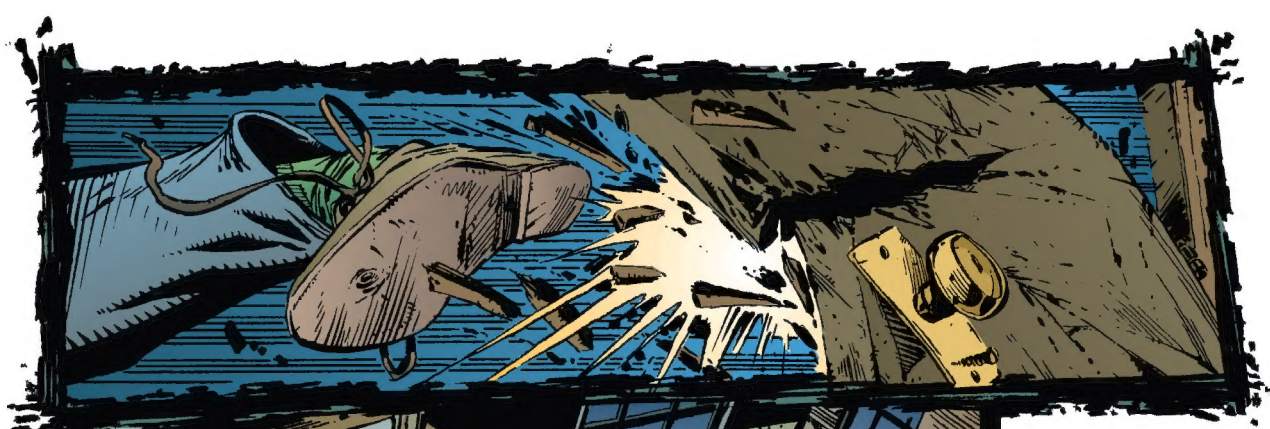




i...

i...

ice cream...
ice cream...
ice cream...



WHAT
THE...!

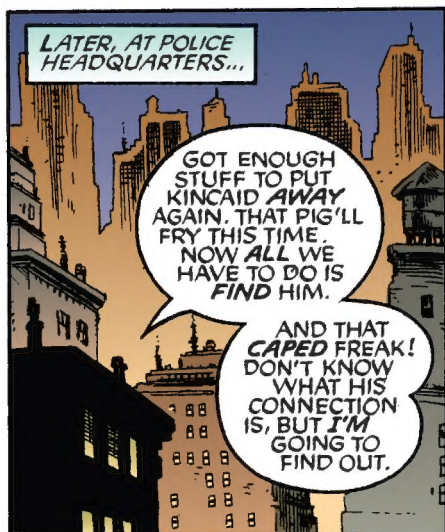
SWEET
MOTHER!
WHAT'S
HAPPENING
HERE?!!

CHECK
THE HOUSE!
NOW!

A QUICK SEARCH
REVEALS EVIDENCE
OF ANOTHER
CHILD'S DEATH.



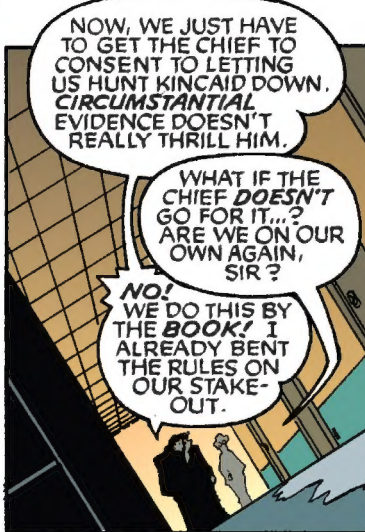
DAMMIT!
THIS IS ALL
WRONG.



LATER, AT POLICE
HEADQUARTERS...

GOT ENOUGH
STUFF TO PUT
KINCAID AWAY
AGAIN. THAT PIG'LL
FRY THIS TIME.
NOW ALL WE
HAVE TO DO IS
FIND HIM.

AND THAT
CAPED FREAK!
DON'T KNOW
WHAT HIS
CONNECTION
IS, BUT I'M
GOING TO
FIND OUT.



NOW, WE JUST HAVE
TO GET THE CHIEF TO
CONSENT TO LETTING
US HUNT KINCAID DOWN.
CIRCUMSTANTIAL
EVIDENCE DOESN'T
REALLY THRILL HIM.

WHAT IF THE
CHIEF DOESN'T
GO FOR IT...?
ARE WE ON OUR
OWN AGAIN,
SIR?

NO!
WE DO THIS BY
THE BOOK! I
ALREADY BENT
THE RULES ON
OUR STAKE-
OUT.



I CAN'T MAKE
ANY MORE
EXCEPTIONS.

FORTUNATELY,
SOME CAN.

BOYS SCREAMED
AND GIRLS SCREAMED
SO I MADE HIM SCREAM
AND SCREAM
AND SCREAM...





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE